



Governor's Sterling Award & Sustained Excellence Best Practice



Parks Foundation Partnership- Strategic Planning Focus; Fit 2 Play– Measurement Knowledge & Analysis Focus and S.A.F.E.-Workforce Focus

Description of Best Practices: The Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Department (MDPROS) operates a large urban park system, managing over 260 park properties comprised of active and passive parks, as well as protected environmentally sensitive properties. MDPROS operates as both a countywide park system and a local parks department for the unincorporated area serving a total of 2.59 million residents.

Parks Foundation Partnership

MDPROS established the Business Development, Fundraising and Advocacy Division (BDFA) to better coordinate all alternative funding, serving as the liaison to the Parks Foundation. The Parks Foundation's mission is to support parks in Miami-Dade County; this relationship facilitates the development and funding of special events, programs and advocacy for MDPROS. The Parks Foundation has established "giving" programs that directly benefit MDPROS and its programs as well as grow new funding opportunities. An example of this is the Swim for Jenny Memorial Fund which was created to provide free learn to swim lessons to underserved children of Miami-Dade County.

Fit 2 Play

MDPROS has partnered with the University of Miami (UM) U-Health system to assist in monitoring its out-of-school program's health, wellness and obesity prevention initiatives. This unique program, known as Fit-2-Play, is aimed at making fitness fun for kids of all ages and abilities. As part of the program and in an effort to determine its impact on health, wellness and obesity prevention, children participating in the program are measured on a pre and post program basis for weight and total body mass index. As concluded by UM's study of the program, "results show that those children who participate in the Fit-2-Play afterschool parks program significantly improve physical health and fitness levels as well their nutrition knowledge over one school year."

S.A.F.E.

In an effort to reduce the most common types of accidents/injuries amongst MDPROS employees, the SAFE Program (Safe Active Fit Employees) was developed and piloted. The three-pronged approach heightened awareness through training, a poster campaign featuring MDPROS employees, and voluntary pre-work dynamic stretching exercises. The pilot group was the Crandon Park Maintenance Crew and emphasis was placed on safety training, awareness and physical preparedness to do the job. As a result of the success of the pilot study, this program has been implemented to other areas in the Department.

Results:

Parks Foundation Partnership



- Through fundraising efforts, currently over \$100,000 have been raised
- Provides over 1,500 children with swimming lessons annually



| TEST | Pretest (Fall 2010) | Posttest (Spring 2011) | Difference | P value |
|---------------|------------------------|---------------------------|------------|---------|
| Sit-and-Reach | 25.7 | 26.2 | .55 | 0.01 |
| Push Ups | 21.7 | 24.9 | +3.3 | <0.0001 |
| Sit Ups | 25.2 | 28.6 | +3.8 | <0.0001 |
| 400 Meter Run | 260.5 | 201.7 | -58.1 | 0.0003 |
| Pacer Test | 16.0 | 16.7 | .72 | NS |



S.A.F.E.

Employee Focus Group Pilot Study Results

- 68% are more aware of safety
- 54% are participating in the stretching exercise program on a regular basis
- 47% stated they are engaging in more “health improving behaviors” (diet & exercise) outside of work as a result of this program



Application: How could these best practices be replicated in other organizations?

Strategic Planning Focus (Parks Foundation Partnership) organizations must;

- Develop long-range strategy for organizational sustainability
- Identify organizations with complementing mission & values that are financially viable and would like to collaborate
- Establish and maintain partnerships to assist in success and viability of organization

Measurement, Knowledge & Analysis Focus (Fit-2-Play) organizations must;

- Develop standardized methods of collecting data across the organization, align to strategic plan
- Develop partnerships that can enhance services provided by the organization and validate results
- Routinely review data collected to ensure strategic goals are being met

Workforce Focus (S.A.F.E.) organizations must:

- Research and identify recurring employee accidents and injuries
- Develop action plan to reduce accidents and injuries;
 - Provide training
 - Develop awareness campaign
 - Implement behavior changing strategies
- Collect and review data regularly to ensure desired outcomes

